

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:LCKILDAY:RCS
APPROVED BY ARA: WILLIAM D. ROGERS
EUR/NE:JSHUMATE
ARA/CEN:MWEISSMAN
ARA:WLUERS
ARA/HARYAN
S/S:O:PSHANKLE
S:DPASSAGE

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R 100232Z MAR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 057951

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GT UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE

1. SECRETARY'S LATIN AMERICAN TRIP WAS DISCUSSED AT MARCH 5 LUNCHEON MEETING BETWEEN DCM MORETON AND POLOFF SAMUELS OF UK EMBASSY AND ARA OFFICERS INCLUDING ASST. SEC'Y. ROGERS AND DEP. ASST. SEC'Y. LUERS. EMBOFFS INQUIRED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER FALKLAND ISLANDS QUESTION HAD ARISEN IN ANY OF SECRETARY'S DISCUSSIONS AND WHETHER SECRETARY HAD DISCUSSED BELIZE PROBLEM WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA AND/OR PRESIDENT LAUGERUD.

2. ASST. SEC'Y. ROGERS TOLD MORETON AND SAMUELS THAT FALKLAND ISLANDS QUESTION DID NOT ARISE DURING TRIP. ROGERS BRIEFED UK EMBOFFS ON BELIZE PORTION OF SECRETARY'S DIS-
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CUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND FOREIGN MINISTER

MOLINA, DRAWING THEIR ATTENTION TO MOLINA'S VIEWS THAT:

(A) POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO GEORGE PRICE DID NOT SHARE PRICE'S ENTHUSIASM FOR EARLY INDEPENDENCE, AND (B) THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE SOME TERRITORIAL CONCESSION TO GUATEMALA. ROGERS ADDED THAT, BASED ON STRENGTH OF MOLINA'S STATEMENT, HE THOUGHT IT

LIKELY THAT TALKS WOULD BREAK DOWN AT MOMENT UK MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT NO TERRITORY COULD BE ADDED TO GUATEMALA.

3. WITH REGARD TO (A) ABOVE, MORETON STATED THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT DEAN LINDO OF OPPOSITION UDP WOULD BE PART OF UK-GOB NEGOTIATING TEAM FOR FEBRUARY TALKS. WITH REGARD TO POINT (B) SAMUELS WONDERED WHETHER GOG MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN SWAPPING SOME OF ITS TERRITORY ALONG BELIZE BORDER IN PETEN FOR PRESUMABLY EQUAL AMOUNT OF TERRITORY ALONG PRESENT SOUTHERN BELIZE-GUATEMALA BORDER. SAMUELS STRESSED THAT THIS WAS HIS OWN IDEA AT THIS POINT AND HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED WITHIN HMG. DEPTOFFS ASKED WHY UK HAD ABANDONED NOTION OF TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WHICH WERE PROMINENT FEATURE OF UK NEGOTIATING POSITION IN 1975 TALKS. SAMUELS REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT SIR IVOR RICHARD HAD EXCEEDED HIS INSTRUCTIONS BY DISCUSSING TERRITORY.

4. EMBOFFS ASKED WHETHER LAUGERUD'S GOVERNMENT REMAINED STABLE FOLLOWING EARTHQUAKE, AND WHETHER CHALLENGE OF RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO CHANGE GUATEMALAN VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF BELIZE DISPUTE. DEPT. OFFS. DOUBTED THAT DIFFICULTIES OF POST-EARTHQUAKE PERIOD WOULD EASE INTENSITY OF GUATEMALA'S PUBLIC OR OFFICIAL ATTITUDES ON BELIZE QUESTION. DEPTOFFS ALSO SAID THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS NOW THAT LAUGERUD GOVERNMENT WAS ANY LESS STABLE FOLLOWING EARTHQUAKE THAN IT HAD BEEN BEFORE. DEPTOFFS ALSO SPECULATED ON POSSIBILITY THAT A CONTINUING ENERGETIC AND EFFICIENT GOG RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE EARTHQUAKE COULD LEAD TO EVEN GREATER PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE GOG WHICH, UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS, MIGHT ENHANCE THE GOG'S ABILITY TO CONCLUDE A SETTLEMENT OF BELIZE

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PROBLEM.

5. MORETON EXPRESSED GREAT APPRECIATION FOR CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IMPRESSIONS ON BELIZE PROBLEM. HE WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED TO NOTE THAT US POSITION SEEMED TO HAVE SHIFTED OVER PAST YEAR OR SO. WHEREAS PREVIOUSLY, HMG HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE US WOULD NOT INVOLVE ITSELF IN ANY WAY IN SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, IT

NOW APPEARED THAT US WAS PREPARED TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE
ROLE IF ALL PARTIES AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL.
ASST. SEC'Y ROGERS REPLIED THAT GOG ON A NUMBER OF
OCCASIONS HAD SOUGHT TO ENLIST THE DIRECT PARTICIPATION
OF THE SECRETARY IN SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE, AND THAT
SECRETARY HAD TOLD LAUGERUD AND MOLINA THAT USG WOULD NOT
MEDIATE DISPUTE. ROGERS ADDED THAT HE MIGHT BE WILLING
TO RECOMMEND THAT THE USG PLAY A ROLE IN THE SUBSTANCE OR
PROCEDURE OF A SETTLEMENT UNDER THE PROPER CONDITIONS, IN-
CLUDING (A) THE PARTIES WERE CLEARLY WITHIN STRIKING
DISTANCE OF A SETTLEMENT; (B) US INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE
BRIEF AND DECISIVE; (C) USG INVOLVEMENT WOULD NOT LEAVE
FUTURE US GENERATION WITH A LEGACY OF BITTERNESS
AND RESENTMENT AMONG ANY OF THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE.

6. EMBOFFS REPORTED THAT TALKS WOULD NOW BE RESUMED SOME
TIME IN APRIL. GOG HAD ONLY RECENTLY EXPRESSED WILLING-
NESS TO MEET IN EARLY APRIL IF BELIZEANS WERE EXCLUDED
FROM TALKS, OR LATE APRIL IF BELIZEANS WERE INCLUDED.
UK CONSUL MCQUILLAN, ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, HAD TOLD GOG
THAT HMG WOULD PREFER EARLY APRIL DATE WITH BELIZEANS
PRESENT. KISSINGER

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